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Virginia Racing Commission Awards Marketing Grants for 2007 Racing Season

Grants Awarded Will Help to Promote a Native Racing Industry in the Commonwealth

Richmond, Va. (March 26, 2007) – The Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) recently awarded \$57,500 in marketing grant money to organizations including Virginia Horsemen's Benevolent Protective Association (VHBPA), Virginia Thoroughbred Association, Colonial Downs and funding to a weekly statewide equine industry radio program.

The VHBPA received \$18,000 to help sponsor the 2nd Annual Owners' Day at Colonial Downs on June 16, the same day as the \$750,000 Colonial Turf Cup. This event is expected to draw owners from across the nation to Colonial Downs. The VHBPA also received assistance to help with costs associated with hosting the Horsemen's Benevolent Protective Association (HBPA) National Annual Convention in Williamsburg and will hold an event at Colonial Downs July 21 to celebrate the Virginia Derby.

The Virginia Thoroughbred Association award of \$8,000 will help fund Awards Day, June 16, at Colonial Downs honoring Virginia's top horses, owners and breeders.

Colonial Downs will receive up to \$21,500 in matching grant funds to implement a 12-page supplement in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The supplement will aide in promoting the Virginia Derby on July 21 and will support the ongoing promotion of the horse industry by VRC.

The Commission also allocated \$10,000 in grant funding for a state-wide radio program, "Down the Stretch," a one-hour show each Saturday during race season featuring race analysis of upcoming events and other Virginia equine and national industry news. The first program is scheduled to air April 7 and will be hosted by WINA-AM in Charlottesville.

"The allocation of these funds will support the Virginia Racing Commission's ongoing purpose of raising awareness of the horse industry in the Commonwealth and will coincide with the ongoing efforts of the Racing Commission," said Peter Burnett, chairman of VRC.

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In other business, the Commission approved revisions in a rule governing Pools involving four or more races, also known as an exotic wager. The previous rule read that wagers on scratched horses in Pools reverted to race time favorites. The revised rule reads that when the condition of the track warrants a change in racing surface after wagering has begun then all horses in that race will be deemed winners for Pick Pool wagering purposes.

In addition, Colonial Downs announced its upcoming eight-week event schedule for the racing season with such events as, a micro-brew festival with live music during the Colonial Turf Cup on June 16, a 5K run the weekend of the Virginia Derby, Virginia's Finest Day on July 28, which will feature products from across the state, and Fan Appreciation Day among many other events.

The VRC also directed race stewards to take note of new special points of emphasis as recommended by the Racing Officials Accreditation Program. Points include improving communication between track officials and track management, reviewing each race prior to making the race official, requiring jockeys ride out horses through the finish of the race and uniform posting of the inquiry sign.

About Virginia Racing Commission

The Virginia Racing Commission was established by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1989 to grow, sustain and control the native horse racing industry in Virginia, including control of all horse racing with pari-mutuel wagering that is conducted in the Commonwealth. For more information, please visit www.vrc.virginia.gov.

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